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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AF/EA, DCHA
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SUBJECT: USAID RESPONSE TO GEREIDA DISPLACEMENTS

REF: A) 05 Khartoum 1905, B) 05 Khartoum 2195

Summary

11. On April 2, a USAID Darfur Field Office representative participated in an interagency visit to Gereida, South Darfur. USAID is playing a key role in supporting expanded humanitarian assistance to the area, where interethnic fighting has caused the internally displaced person (IDP) population to grow from 49,000 in early November to approximately 90,000 currently. The humanitarian community is concerned that additional attacks on Gereida-area villages will continue causing IDPs to flock to Gereida town, where resources are stretched already. USAID is working with partners to design a program to respond to the humanitarian needs, which include water and sanitation services and food.

Background

12. Gereida is located 90 kilometers (km) south of Nyala in Buram locality. According to humanitarian agencies, approximately 40,000 IDPs arrived in Gereida between July and September 2004, following Arab militia attacks on Yassin. Humanitarian agencies reported that the Gereida area remained peaceful through early 2005 due to an intertribal "gentlemen's agreement" that Gereida town would remain neutral. Following the death of an influential Masalit leader who was instrumental in keeping peace, Arab militias, mostly consisting of ethnic Habania, began launching attacks on Joghana and other villages southeast of Gereida in early 2005. According to the U.N., more than 30 villages were attacked, destroyed, and deserted. In April and May 2005, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took control of Gereida town. By May and June 2005, clashes between the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the JEM spread to Gereida town. The SLM/A expelled the JEM, and by October 2005 the SLM/A took full control of Gereida town. The SLM/A maintains a heavy presence in Gereida.

13. According to U.N. figures, the Gereida IDP population

had grown to 49,000 as of July 2005, and remained at approximately that size until November. Conflict intensified in villages surrounding Gereida in early November (Ref B) after Fallata (Arab) militias began attacking Masalit villages. Intertribal conflict resulted in the displacement of an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people between November and the present, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Attacks on surrounding villages continue. The U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) reported attacks on villages around Gereida on March 10 and March 18, resulting in the deaths of 69 civilians and abductions of an unknown number of women and girls. According to humanitarian agencies, the belt of villages to the south, west, and east of Gereida is now empty.

Current Humanitarian Situation

¶4. According to ICRC, between 80,000 to 90,000 IDPs now live in Gereida IDP camp. The IDP population has grown by approximately 80 percent since November 1, when the U.N. Humanitarian Profile listed the Gereida IDP population as 49,000. Humanitarian agencies manage Gereida as one camp with several major sectors: Old Camp, where those who arrived in 2004 live; Je Je; Dar Es Salam, where approximately 20,000 IDPs live; and a yet-unnamed sector still receiving new arrivals. The camp is spread in a horseshoe around Gereida town, with the opening on the north side. The geographic size of the camp is unknown, as mapping exercises have not yet commenced. In addition, approximately 50 to 100 Fallata families live in a small camp called Sadoun, located 2 km

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from Gereida.

¶5. Only three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - Oxfam, ICRC, and ZOA - are providing services for a population that is approximately the size of Kalma camp, where more than 10 NGOs work. A March 22 interagency assessment team found water, food, and relief supplies to be among the greatest needs. Water and sanitation needs must be addressed in advance of the rainy season, when the combination of defecation, standing water, and high density will provide an excellent breeding ground for disease. Oxfam runs the only 2 boreholes, which are currently operating at 20 hours per day. This is sufficient to meet SPHERE minimum standards of 15 liters per person per day; however, an estimated 18,000 donkeys, 8,000 horses, and 17,000 cattle in the camp strain the water supply. Oxfam reports an immediate need for 1,000 latrines. The government-imposed embargo on fuel transport into SLM/A-held areas of South Darfur remains in place, but in recent weeks ICRC has been able to transport fuel to Gereida without problems.

¶6. An ICRC surgical team works in the area, specifically attending to conflict-related injuries. ICRC is operating a primary health care center with one doctor and one midwife. Two doctors provide additional services at the Gereida town hospital. ICRC has been providing food rations in Gereida, but hopes to transition food distributions to a U.N. World Food Program (WFP) implementing partner as soon as possible, in order shift ICRC operations to the Jebel Marra region of West Darfur. ICRC plans to maintain Gereida health and nutrition programs through the end of 2006.

¶7. Protection is a major concern. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is advocating for an expanded international humanitarian presence in Gereida. Humanitarian agencies fear that continued attacks around Gereida may result in additional displacements of thousands of people, particularly the

estimated 20,000 IDPs, mostly women and children, in Joghana camp, 27 km southeast of Gereida. The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) maintains a compound in Gereida, but the population does not trust AMIS to provide security. According to UNMIS, on March 11 approximately 1,000 IDPs and residents from Gereida and Joghana attacked the AMIS compound, throwing stones, pulling down the fence, and destroying property. Two AMIS personnel were injured.

USAID Response

18. The USAID Darfur Field Office has taken a lead role in coordinating increased assistance to Gereida IDPs by working with partners at the Khartoum and field level to design a program to respond to humanitarian needs in Gereida. When WFP and ICRC were unable to find a partner to take on food distributions after ICRC pulls out, USAID began searching for a USAID partner that could implement both WFP food distributions and additional USAID-funded activities in the area. USAID is engaged in discussions with Action Contre la Faim (ACF), which is in the process of submitting a proposal to carry out USAID-funded water and sanitation and health and nutrition activities in Gereida, in addition to taking on the food distribution caseload. USAID will continue to monitor the situation and report on progress towards meeting the humanitarian needs of Gereida IDPs.

STEINFELD